

Lifelines

The Newsletter of the RI AFG, August, 2011

Workshop News: by Ashley

2011 RIAFG Workshop Committee: The 2011 RIAFG Workshop Committee has met twice over the past two months and is extremely excited about brining RIAFGs a full day of recovery (and laughter!).

SAVE THE DATE: November 19, 2011 - Butler Hospital • Ray Conference Center

"Healing in Humor": RIAFG Annual Workshop with AA participation

Decisions made at the Committee's first two meetings:

- It will be awesome!!!
- 2011 Theme: "HEALING IN HUMOR"
- Workshop Time: 9:30am-4:30pm
- Program will include: Breakfast with Bill, Lunch with Lois, and Afternoon with Alateen (subject to Alateen approval)
- Workshop will open with grounding exercise and live music
- Workshop will include 3 breakout sessions/mini-meetings (3 rooms of Al- Anon, 1 room of Alateen, 1 room of AA)
- Workshop will include a skit
- Committee members will spread the word far and wide and include a subtitle on all outreach materials that explains what the workshop is A CALL TO ACTION.

The Workshop Committee needs your help! Please consider one (or more!) of the following opportunities for service:

- Chairing or Co-Chairing the Crafts/Love Gifts Subcommittee
- Joining the Outreach Subcommittee to help spread the word and get boatloads of people to attend the Workshop on November 19th!
- Volunteering to set up on Friday, November 18th or clean up on November 19th
- Telling your group(s) to start collecting items for the Alateen "White Elephant Table" (no clothes, please—scarves and gloves okay)
- Asking your group(s) to start thinking about awesome ideas for a basket to donate to the raffle
- Making some nifty crafts and/or love gifts
- Thinking about delicious foods you might bring to the potluck lunch on November 19th (Did someone say Thanksgiving?)
- Making a list of all the Al-Anon friends you plan to bring with you on November 19th! **IF YOU'RE UP FOR SOME GOOD OL' AL-ANON SERVICE, PLEASE CONTACT: riafgworkshop@gmail.com**

● AREA News:

- Feedback highlights from members who attended the Area Assembly in June:
- **What did you like BEST about today's interim Assembly and why?**
- *I loved learning about the business of Al-Anon and seeing in action the steps, traditions, concepts.*
- *I learned a lot more about the workings of WSO, discussions at the world level happening in Al-Anon.*
- Delegate's report was well done and interesting
- Fellowship and interaction with members of other groups
- Very organized and staying on track with time
- Found the assembly to be informative and organized
- Submitted by **Leah D.**, Area Chair

The next World Service Area Meeting will be on Tuesday, Sept 20th at 7PM.

* A copy of the full minutes for every Area meeting and Assembly are available to all at the Area office



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PODCASTS:****Six Al-Anon members were chosen to do a podcast for WSO on Tradition 8. It is available on the members' website. They asked participants to let our areas know, to get the members involved. Thanks, **JC.******

District News

As for District 3: Schedule of District 3 Meetings

- November Assembly
- Sat., Dec 3, 6:00 PM, Calvary Methodist Church, Middletown, RI-Final meeting for Marguerite as DR

As for District 4: Schedule of Meetings

- Alateen Meetings
Tuesday 5:30pm Coventry Senior Center, Coventry
Friday 8:00pm St Luke's Church, East Greenwich
- District Meetings
September 14 Wednesday 6:30pm 106 Rolfe St
December 10 Saturday 10:00am 106 Rolfe St
- Meetings Needing Support
Mon 10:00 AM Mon 7:00 PM
Thurs 10:00 AM

Conflict Resolution Workshop: We all have conflict in our lives, but it is especially poignant when we are living with active alcoholism. It is easy to discount the messenger bearing conflict, but we can learn to listen to the underlying message without accepting the invitation to a fight. We can apply the Al-Anon tradition of "principals above personalities." There is no need to argue at all if we are confronted with what we can recognize as an irreconcilable difference. We can just respond with a few neutral words, like "You might be right," or something even simpler than that, like a guttural sound that can't be interpreted either way.

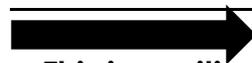
The tools we can use to turn conflict into constructive experience are self-examination, honest communication, find a solution, and plan of action. We can ask ourselves questions like, "Am I trying to win, or am I trying to solve a conflict?" "What is the common good?" (This comes from Tradition One). "Do I clearly understand what I need to resolve?" "Am I willing to move on?" "Have I placed the outcome in my Higher Power's hands?" "Is this a good time to attempt resolution? Am I hungry, angry, lonely or tired?"

In honest communication I will listen for key points, be sure all sides are heard, acknowledge the positions of others, and allow venting if necessary (without joining in). I will not assume others know what I know, and I will not make demands. My messages are more palatable if I preface each one with an "I" and never point the finger at the other person.

In finding solutions, we can discuss the many that are available to us. Let us choose the easiest one to work on first and build on that over time. One problem at a time. After discussion of each one, ask "Can you live with this?" If you can't get to resolution, try the Serenity Prayer, take a break and stretch or have lunch, call your sponsor, find a better time. You might even want to set the agenda for the next time listing points of disagreement. Acknowledge any successes you may have had so far in reaching points of agreement. Participation is the key to harmony! We can sort out irreconcilable differences from those in which it is starting to appear that compromise can happen. Don't forget to celebrate when you are able to come to agreement after honest, open attempts to communicate and find solutions!

This, in a nutshell, is what **Barbara M.** prepared for us. After each point we shared our experience, strength and hope. It was wonderful, and I hope it can be repeated now and then for other members. Submitted by **Catherine H.**

WEB SITE NEWS:



This is exciting – the meeting list on the web site now has links to Google Maps to show the locations of the meetings.

Much appreciation to **Phyllis H.** our Website Coordinator

Al-Anon Web Sites



ur local, Area 49 web site
<http://www.riafg.org>



he Al-Anon Members' Web site
<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/members>



odcasts <http://al-anonfamilygroups.org/Podcasts/FirstSteps/>



online meetings and outreach <http://www.ola-is.org>



ublic Al-Anon/Alateen site
<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>

Our Area Web site is a great central reference point for information applicable to the entire Area!

The Members' Web site is a password-protected site; the password is the name of your group plus the letters "afg".

This site is loaded with valuable program information and resources.

Fellowship Shares

Just ME- By Anna M.

In different Al-Anon meetings I have heard members speak of their "qualifier" as the person to whom they are in relation who is an alcoholic. I am the granddaughter and niece of alcoholics around whom I spent little time. Since alcoholism is a family disease, the impact of compulsion and addiction flows through family members and through the generations. My mother, while apparently not an alcoholic, carries in her the energy patterns of her mother, and similarly my father is energetically like his brother.

Upon completing my Third Step with my sponsor I began saying I was my own qualifier – no longer referring to my parents or others. This helped me see more clearly the affects that live in me even though I am (so far!) not an alcoholic. My energy is compulsive – I tend to over-do, eat when stressed and put more effort towards others than towards my self-care.

Al-Anon has helped me gain immeasurable clarity about my co-dependent strivings and through my Fourth Step work understand how I respond to challenges and how I became self-avoidant for my survival when I didn't know any better. Al-Anon helps me take care of myself first, share intimacy in meetings and with my sponsor so I don't isolate and fall into victim-thinking. I am learning to notice when I become frozen in a kind of helpless state – now I know to pick up the phone, get to a meeting, slow down, pray and wait for options to reveal themselves to me.

Since money was such a highly charged subject up and down my family tree, during this recession I am becoming more aware of my wish to avoid taking care of many of the mundane money management tasks. Recently I spoke with my sponsor, wrote in my journal, and turned over some questions to my Higher Power. Within a couple of days a friend asked for my help with organizing his financial paperwork. And I said "yes" while writing a note of gratitude in my journal. Since it is easier to help someone else organize, what I needed to do was make a promise to myself to use my friend's request as "practice" for myself. And it's working. I am thawing and feeling more able to respond to my financial paperwork.

When I am reluctant to cook myself a nice homemade meal I recall with some lightness and humor how easily I would put together a meal for any former boyfriend! And this provides me some positive inspiration instead of turning every "responsibility" into a serious chore. I want to enjoy self-care. Practicing new approaches to tasks is an important creative aspect of my recovery.

In the past I was fiercely proud of my independence – now, I am so enjoying my interdependence with my recovery friends. I feel like I get to be authentically me – I am not my job, my roles, my home or my financial status. Finally I am just me – imperfect, warm and loving.

Success is not final

Failure is not fatal

It is the courage to continue that counts.

---Winston Churchill

"The greatest oak was once a little nut that held its ground."--Author Unknown



Tradition 7 self-supporting-declining outside contributions

I remember reading a nice forum article from way back in the 80's. It delineated ways we could apply traditions to our home and family life. This tradition was especially helpful to me while I was learning to apply the Al-anon principles to all my affairs and raising teenagers. I find kids in their later teens will tend to minimize how much they still rely on their parents support. They wish parents would just stay out of their lives while at the same time accepting all they want and need from their parents--a key point within the process to eventually being fully self-supporting adults. In response to that sentiment and more than once, I found myself saying "I am still your parent and legal guardian. Yes, I will stop giving my input, but not until you are fully self-supporting declining outside (my financial) contributions."

Sharon F. (Cranston/Warwick Tuesday meeting)

Slogan Shares

One of my favorite slogans is **One Day at a Time** - I too often am inclined to get way ahead of myself & project past experiences onto possible future outcomes. I believe it is a way of self-protection that worked in the past, but is no longer serving me. When I go to a meeting and hear or pick up the literature & read that simple phrase I am immediately returned to the state of mind that I can find greater serenity in: Being here now in this one day & doing the best I can with that block of time (with HP's guidance of course)

Sharon F. (Cranston/Warwick Tuesday Meeting)

Let Go and Let God

Is to breathe in, to breathe out and anchor myself in the present moment with a willingness to feel the fullness of it. **Let Go and Let God** is a mantra or a vehicle to anchor me to the present, it helps to replace mind chatter which always leads me to the past and future accompanied with dread and worry. If I can really repeat this slogan in a time of crisis with the intention of pure willingness in time my anxieties are relieved and I am better able to cope with the situation at hand no matter how painful. The more I use Let Go and Let God the more it happens. The more it happens, the less a crisis has a grip on me; the more I'm able to breathe in and out no matter how painful.

Deb M.

Stinking Thinking

My very first Al-Anon meeting I attended a member shared about **Stinking Thinking**. At first all I could picture was a skunk, but then he shared how someone living with or has lived with someone who drinks distorts our thinking. It made me start to think or listen to what I was thinking and, boy, did it smell. It really made me step out of my box and look at myself. I had to realize that I was the cause of my bad day.

Paul R.



June Assembly Share: June appears to be a great month for Service. The GRs were challenged to represent their home groups and many responded. Out of our 50+ groups, we did get nearly 60% of GRs, Alternate GRs or Proxies in attendance. It was a very good turnout for a beautiful Saturday in June.

This year there was a service basket – place your name and info into the basket if you are “willing” to do service for RIAFG. Members' names were then selected to serve on Thought Forces or Committees – Workshop, International Convention or Staggered Terms. And there was a surprise Raffle from the names in the basket for DVDs and our new book!!! Jenny supplied these directly from WSO. In case you are wondering, YES, there is still room for anyone to join a committee or force!

We did actually get some work done, too. We passed 2 policies and 1 set of Guidelines for future Assemblies. One of our break-out groups was a Q & A regarding these policies and guidelines. It was great to have the time to ingest newer thoughts before we were brought back together for a vote. Communication is a fabulous way to help us move forward with our program. RI should be proud of their Assembly Members!

> Our other break-out group was an informative Q & A with our Delegate. This 45 minute break-out was a wonderful way to learn of the goings on at WSO; and at the WSO. The future of Al-Anon is today. And we are in good, strong hands. Decisions may take time, but the thought and preparation in making any decision is truly extensive. On another note, I believe we had our first ever Alateen GR present for this Assembly. Kudos to **Devin P.** for stepping forward to endure this all day, sometimes fun sometimes tedious, event.

Lastly, I personally want to thank all members of the Assembly Task Force and AWSC for their continuing help and support in these gatherings. Planning started in January and in my humble opinion, all went well -- location, set-up, food, audio, visual, clean-up -- with the helping hand of Al-Anon/Alateen. **Anonymous**

Al-Anon Upcoming Events

September 2011

District 4 Meeting

Sept 14th 6:30 PM – Area Office, 106 Rolfe St., Cranston
All District 4 GRs and others interested in participating in service are encouraged to attend.

Area Workd Service Committee Meeting

Sept 20th 7:00 PM – Area Office, 106 Rolfe St., Cranston
If you are interested in participating in service, please attend!

District 3 Meeting

Sept 27th 6:00 PM – St. Michaels Parish Hall, 399 Hope St, Bristol
All District 3 GRs and others interested in participating in service are encouraged to attend.



AUGUST 2011						
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RI Al-Anon Family Groups Area Office/Literature Distribution Center (LDC)

106 Rolfe Street, Cranston, RI 02910

Hours: Please call the office

Phone/Fax: 401-781-0044

E-mail: RI_Al-Anon@hotmail.com

Lifelines e-subscription: Email mailto:RI_Al-Anon@hotmail.com (type "Mailing List" in the subject line)

Web: www.RIAFG.org

An area newsletter is a vital link in keeping groups and members informed. The purposes of *Lifelines* are to: encourage attendance at service events; communicate local, area, and Al-Anon Information Service news; and attract Al-Anon members into service.

If you are interested in serving on the *Lifelines* Committee, please call the office at the number listed above. If you would like more information about the tasks and time commitment involved, you may contact Linda F. at rilifelines@gmail.com or 401-855-6009 (it's safe to leave a message).

A special thank you to all who contribute!